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# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

## AMERICAN TAPESTRY.



Shakespeare refers scenes from Homer's Iliad, but anterior to the work even of the artists of the middle ages, even beginning with the earliest trace of civilization, we find mention made of the existence of such decoration. As recorded by the Egyptians on their monuments, high warp looms for weaving tapestries existed in Egypt 3,000 years before the Christian era, and the Egyptian weavers of this early time were on a par with those of modern times in dexterity and finish, although their art was inferior by the weavers confining themselves to the use of cotton and linen, for the experience of many centuries was requisite to prove that silk and wool were essential to give the fabric depth of color and brilliancy. The tapestries of Babylon and Nineveh were remarkable for their skillful workmanship, their rich textures and the grandeur of their compositions. Covered with battle or hunting scenes, or recording the victories of conquerors and the stories of gods, they filled the temples and palaces of the past with life and animation. The textile art was highest in Greece in the time of Homer, who celebrated the loom of Penelope and represents the immortals as delighting in the delicate toil. In such high repute was it held that wives and daughters of the heroes of Greece and Troy wove with their own hands the fabrics that decorated their sanctuaries. The porticoes, the galleries and the houses of the idols were all clothed in brilliant fabrics, and over the open space in the roof a decorated canopy was stretched over the head of the god.

PURELY in view of the growing importance of the subject we once more refer to American oil-painted tapestry as the latest outcome of the ancient tapestries, either woven, dyed stained or painted, on which were depicted animals, birds, fruits, flowers and historical scenes, in compositions rivaling in splendor the beauty of actual life, were the natural completion of public and private edifices, imparting a splendor that could not be obtained by any other decorative device. to tapestries of his time painted with

Among the Hebrews the tapestry was used in the building of the tabernacle and in the decoration of the temple. The Romans, seizing the spoils of surrounding nations, soon became luxurious in their use of the rich housings of antiquity. The Romans owe to the Greeks their art, and in color preferred purple, as the Greeks preferred saffron. Antiquity possessed all the knowledge of weaving and dyeing requisite for bringing woven fabrics to the highest degree of perfection, and made use of this art in all its forms for its palaces, wall hangings, curtains, etc., and excelled in every style of manufactured linen, wool and silk.

After the fall of Rome, the history of the middle ages is a record of anarchy in which both learning and art sank into a state of decline that seemed irremediable. Europe, however, was raised from its lethargy by the Moslem invasions, which carried art and literature in the wake of their religious wars.

Then followed the European Crusades by which the east and west were brought into immediate contact. In the twelfth century a spirit of life and poetry overran Europe, and architecture began to attain its brightest triumphs. The manufacture of tapestry was centered in the midland provinces of France and Flanders, Paris, Arles, Antwerp, Lille and Tournay, and many other towns soon became art centers. The Flemish artists of the fifteenth century depicted vegetation and landscapes on their tapestries, and it is impossible to imagine anything fresher or more brilliant than the flowers which adorned their hangings, which became flower beds of daisies, violets, strawberries, jasmine and primroses. Scriptural scenes were also largely used in the decoration of their tapestries. In the thirteenth century we leave the age of romance and chivalry, the golden age of tapestry, and come to the academic style following the classical age of learning. In the time of Raphael tapestries assumed a more elegant character. It became lighter, brighter and less restrained in composition, and in the Renaissance we find a brilliant constellation of fine decorative artists, amongst whom was Raphael, Ramagna, Rubens and Le Brun. Regarding tapestry simply from the standpoint of the decorations thereon, we find at first animals and ornament, flowers and grotesque, finely balanced and finely treated, then purely domestic subjects, with

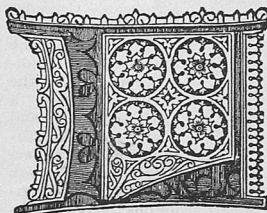


A PAINTED TAPESTRY. SUBJECT—"FLYING THE FALCON."

# THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

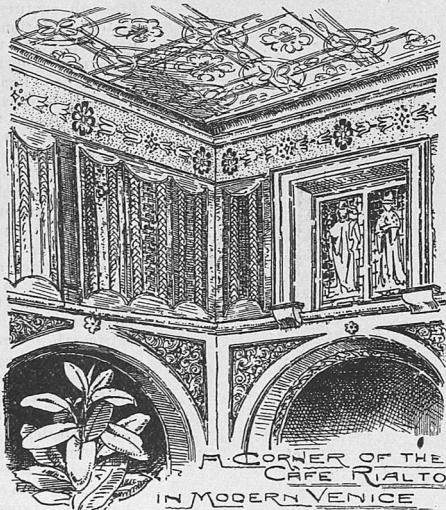
records of character and the times in bold outline and free color. Afterward came the religious age, when the artists knew how to control their feelings and subdue their imagination to the exigencies of decoration, being severe and evenly balanced even in their figure subjects. In a later period the artists led all nature in contribution to embellish and beautify his subject. At last all the trammels of convention were cast aside, and we find portrayed all the manifold variety of human nature. Through all these periods the great masters found their crowning expression in tapestry. In the seventeenth century the development of tapestry reached its culmination. In 1662 the famous establishment known as the Gobelins was founded in Paris, and under the leadership of Le Brun the manufacturer displayed extraordinary activity and adapted such a high standard that it distanced all its rivals, and became the source from which all Europe borrowed its workmen and drew its inspiration.

## LIGNOMUR.



LIGNOMUR is a comparatively new-comer in the list of materials for wall decoration, and is already a powerful competitor of the leading rival fabrics used by the modern decorators. Its decorative use has been cleverly exhibited in its use by the Lignomur Co. in the decoration of the Café Rialto in

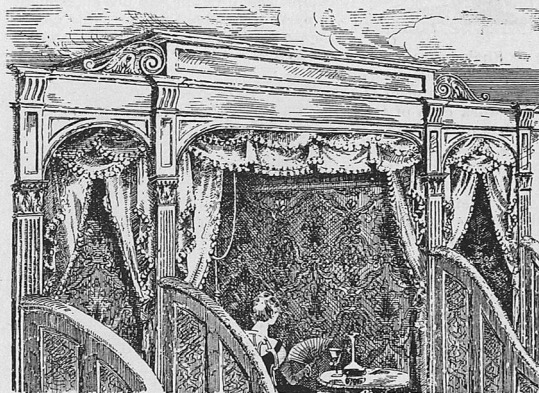
London," a corner of which is shown in the accompanying sketch. The most noted houses, villas and palazzos of the "Queen City of the Adriatic" are represented in solidly built full sized models decorated with consummate art. The decoration of the café was applied by Messrs. Campbell & Smith of London, and is extremely effective. The woodwork is painted white and enamelled. The ceiling is hung with a very complex, semi-Celtic pattern of Lignomur (No. 26), and picked out in tones of grey and yellowish ivory with some green. The frieze



is hung with Lignomur (No. 27), in panels escalloped at top and bottom, and picked in green and salmon, with red stiles and margins. The high windows in the frieze were filled with some of Mr. Edward Frampton's figures in stained glass of a very transparent character, having been painted easily with very little half-tone and hardly any obstruction. The panels and spandrels surrounding the café below the picture moulding

were covered with pattern No. 12 Lignomur, silvered and lacquered in bronzes, having a very rich and satisfying effect. The styles, mouldings, etc., are in reds and terra cotta tones, with a large amount of creamy white. The dado is hung with a small scale pattern, plain color Lignomur, and is particularly effective.

The decoration of the boxes in the theatre, including the royal box, are also carried out by the Lignomur company; The royal box, as shown in our illustration, has a ceiling pattern in blue and the toned white in which the material is made. This has been hung just as it left the works, for the material is



ROYAL BOX IN MODERN VENICE, LONDON, DECORATED WITH LIGNOMUR.

made not only in relief, but in two colors in addition by one and the same process. Being made of wood fibre, it has all the sheen of a deal plank, and the effect is similar to satin brocade, as the sheen upon the raised portions catches and reflects the light. A small frieze was placed above the picture mould, below which the pattern No. 139 decorated the sides of the box. The pattern is a very fine Venetian leather design, richly decorated by hand in golden tones, with leather colored background with all the elaborate finish of hand painted leather in olive toned bronzes. It is hung with brass nails with the natural edges untrimmed like the real old leathers, which removes it altogether from the realm of mere paper hanging. The draperies of the royal box are in old gold plush and satin and the furniture is of ormolu and satin wood, with blue satin damask upholstery. The frames of the occasional chairs are gilded and burnished and the box is lighted by electricity. The carpet is a velvet pile in fawn, gold and indigo blue with soft reds and greens. The woodwork is all enamelled white. The panels in the screens between the royal and the adjoining boxes are filled with Lignomur in admirable patterns in gold color and blue undecorated, that is the two colors in which the material is produced. This is a point which highly commands Lignomur to the practical decorator.

As our readers are aware, the sole agents for Lignomur for the United States are The American Decorative Company of 116 Pearl Street, Boston, Mass., who keep in stock a full line of the various patterns produced in this new decorative material, and are constantly adding new patterns thereto. The following extracts from letters received from decorators who have used Lignomur testify to the excellence of this material:

We have put the Lignomur we bought of you in the two offices of a very prominent doctor, and the pressed papers in the parlor and back parlor of his home, and it is put on in first-class shape, and we shall use his house as an advertisement for your goods.—*Extract from a Letter of a Prominent Decorative House.*

We must say that the result (the application of your pressed paper to a handsome drawing room) far exceeds our expectation. It hangs like a rich, glowing brocade.—*Extract from the Letter of another Leading Decorator.*